

**REMARKS**

Claims 15-20 and 27-31 are pending in the present application. Claim 15 is herein amended. No new matter has been presented.

**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103**

**A. Rejection based on Laskorin in view of Romanovskiy**

Claims 15-20 and 27-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Laskorin** (CAPLUS Abstract of Radiokhimiya (1984), 26(2), 161-6) in view of **Romanovskiy** (US 6,258,333).

Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that Laskorin in view of Romanovskiy does not teach or suggest:

A process for extracting a rare earth metal ion from an aqueous solution containing a rare earth metal ion, comprising using as an extraction agent the phosphonamide compound represented by the general formula [1]

...

wherein R<sup>1</sup> represents a phenyl group which may have an alkoxy group as a substituent

as recited in amended claim 15.

Laskorin does not disclose a compound wherein R<sup>1</sup> is a phenyl group which may have an alkoxy group; and it would not have been obvious from Laskorin and Romanovskiy to use a compound wherein R<sup>1</sup> is a phenyl group which may have an alkoxy group, in place of neutral organophosphorus compounds in the method described in Romanovsky.

In the Examples of the present application, Example 33 and Examples 14 and 35 use phosphoramidate compounds wherein  $R^1$  are different. In Examples 14 and 35, wherein  $R^1$  is a phenyl group or a phenyl group having an alkoxy group, the compounds showed very high extraction ratios compared to Example 33. It would not have been obvious from Laskorin or Romanovsky that a very high extraction ratio could be obtained by using a compound wherein  $R^1$  is a phenyl group which may have alkoxy groups as substituents.

**B. Rejection based on Fadeeva**

Claims 15-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by **Fadeeva** (CAPLUS Abstract of: Zhurnal Neorganicheskoi Khimii (1972), 17(3), 771-5).

Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that Fadeeva does not teach or suggest a compound as recited in amended claim 15 “wherein  $R^1$  represents a phenyl group which may have an alkoxy group as a substituent.”

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 15-20 and 27-31 are patentable over the cited references. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 15-20 and 27-31 is hereby solicited.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,  
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